

VU Research Portal

Communication aimed at changing cognitions about sexual intimidation: comparing the impact of a perpetrator-focused versus a victim-focused persuasive strategy.

Winkel, F.W.; de Kleuver, E.

published in

Journal of Interpersonal Violence
1997

DOI (link to publisher)

[10.1177/088626097012004003](https://doi.org/10.1177/088626097012004003)

document version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication in VU Research Portal](#)

citation for published version (APA)

Winkel, F. W., & de Kleuver, E. (1997). Communication aimed at changing cognitions about sexual intimidation: comparing the impact of a perpetrator-focused versus a victim-focused persuasive strategy. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, (12), 513-530. <https://doi.org/10.1177/088626097012004003>

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

E-mail address:

vuresearchportal.ub@vu.nl

Journal of Interpersonal Violence

<http://jiv.sagepub.com/>

Communication Aimed at Changing Cognitions About Sexual Intimidation : Comparing the Impact of a Perpetrator-Focused Versus a Victim-Focused Persuasive Strategy

FRANS WILLEM WINKEL and ESTHER DE KLEUVER

J Interpers Violence 1997 12: 513

DOI: 10.1177/088626097012004003

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://jiv.sagepub.com/content/12/4/513>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:

American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children

Additional services and information for *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://jiv.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://jiv.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations: <http://jiv.sagepub.com/content/12/4/513.refs.html>

A mass media campaign aimed at discouraging various forms of sexual intimidation via changing males' stereotypical conceptions of dating behavior was conducted by the Dutch government. Inter alia, the idea that macho behavior is basically preferred by females is challenged. This article examines the impact of a campaign-related video. An Achmea-Foundation-sponsored review of the psychological literature suggests two types of persuasive strategies: perpetrator- and victim-focused messages. The presented experiment examined the effect of these strategies on the evaluation of macho behavior in interactions and on the acceptance of sexual intimidation myths. Participants were 198 pupils from different schools. Analyses revealed several Communication \times Sex interactions, suggesting that a perpetrator-focused message may inadvertently foster boys' positive evaluations of macho behavior and may strengthen their idea that coerced sex is acceptable under certain conditions. Instead of reducing such misconceptions, a perpetrator-focused message appeared to backfire: Stereotypes were reinforced.

Communication Aimed at Changing Cognitions About Sexual Intimidation Comparing the Impact of a Perpetrator-Focused Versus a Victim-Focused Persuasive Strategy

FRANS WILLEM WINKEL

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

ESTHER DE KLEUVER

National Criminal Intelligence Division, The Netherlands

As part of its so-called emancipation policy, the Dutch government launched a remarkable initiative aimed at discouraging sexual intimidation, including all “threats to the physical or psychological integrity of females” (*Bestrijding*,

Authors' Note: We are indebted to Professor Friday (Charlotte, USA), Professor Kirchhoff (Moenchengladbach, Germany), Professor Stephenson (Canterbury, UK), and Dr. A. Vrij (Portsmouth, UK) for their comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this manuscript. Portions of this article were presented by the first author at the 10th WSV Post-Graduate Course on Victims, Victimization, and Victim Assistance: Psychological and Legal Aspects (VU Amsterdam, 1995). We thank the course participants and resource persons for their insightful comments.

JOURNAL OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE, Vol. 12 No.4, August 1997 513-529
© 1997 Sage Publications, Inc.

513

1984, p. 1), ranging from the milder forms of sexual harassment to sexual assault and rape at the other extreme. This initiative entails a large-scale, multimedia campaign, sustained through persuasive communication via intermediate channels (schools, community work, work organizations, corporate life, etc.). It includes leaflets, brochures, cartoons in newspapers, and short television commercials. For the intermediate channels, a series of special videos was created and sponsored. From its inception, mass media editorial coverage of the campaign was very substantial. The budget available for the campaign amounts to close to 5 million guilders.

The campaign aims at initiating a nationwide discussion of gender roles. It attempts to make young males more aware of stereotypical images of masculinity and femininity and, through this, ultimately aims at changing their behavior into less macho types of interactions with young females and girls. All messages come with the central slogan "Sex is natural but never obvious."¹ A typical approach used in these messages is to consider so-called obvious regularities from the point of view of men, to whom each step automatically and logically follows from prior ones (Abbey, 1982). It is emphasized that females may interpret these regularities differently and that they have the right to say no to each next step. It is indicated that such male-female interactions, through interpretational differences, may ultimately result easily in sexual intimidation. The core scenario invariably comes down to something like "if she does/allows X, it doesn't automatically imply that she will also do or allow Y" (de Roon, 1991). One of the television advertisements, for example—using the Rolling Stones record, "You Can't Always Get What You Want" as a musical frame—shows images of a couple returning to her apartment after a night out in town. She invites him to have another drink there. He obviously does not want a drink but something else: He just wants a kiss and tries to stick his hands into her crotch. He does not get her message at all and is deeply puzzled by why she is resisting. The advertisement continues to make clear that she merely asked him in for another drink.

Here, we will more closely examine the impact of a video, designed especially for use at schools. In this video, two specific persuasive strategies were utilized to change undesirable conceptions of dating behavior. The theoretical base of these two strategies will first be considered.

SHAPING PERSUASIVE MESSAGES

A common approach in the marketing of "don'ts" is to try to establish through persuasive communication a negative attitude toward the behaviors

in question (Kotler, 1975; Rice & Paisley, 1981). In the present behavioral domain, such an attitude is considered to consist of a negative evaluation of macho behavior in male-female interactions (Damen & Van Oosten, 1988), rejecting sexual intimidation myths (Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980; Check & Malamuth, 1985), and not accepting, under any condition, the use of violence against women to have sexual contact (Malamuth, 1981; Schwartz, Williams, & Pepitone-Rockwell, 1981).

To effect such attitude change, communicators who embrace reasoned action theory (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) then typically employ a negative message highlighting negative behavioral consequences (McGuire, 1981). An obvious way to shape these consequences in a persuasive message is to position the man involved in the behavior as a perpetrator and the woman as a victim. A perpetrator-focused message then communicates that the behavior is legally censured and threatened with various negative sanctions, such as getting arrested by the police, getting involved with the criminal justice system, and occasions negative reactions from the social environment. A victim-focused message, on the other hand, explicitly considers the fact that the behavior may have detrimental consequences for women, such as that the behavior may result in serious psychological distress.

The expectation that a perpetrator-focused message will have the desired attitudinal effects has at least some face validity. Conceptually, this message is related to the criminal justice notion of general prevention, expressing the strong belief that the threat of punishment contained in criminal law works not only through fear (general deterrence) (Jeffery, 1965) but also may have moral or educative effects (Andenaes, 1977), an attitude-shaping or socializing impact (Zimring & Hawkins, 1977), or an expressive (Feinberg, 1965) or declaratory function (Walker, 1964).

There is, moreover, some anecdotal evidence suggesting that the perpetrator-focused message is a viable strategy for changing the various forms of sexual intimidation or the actor's conceptions of these behaviors. For example, Bakker, Damen, Kok, and Schilperoort (1989) interviewed youngsters who had committed various forms of sexual intimidation. Some of these youngsters reported to have been totally unaware of the fact that their behavior was legally prohibited ("my mum didn't tell me that") or were completely surprised by contacts with police officers examining their behavior. More systematic empirical evidence comes from studies in other behavioral domains—for example, on drunk driving (Winkel & Vrij, 1996), the use of safety belts (Winkel, 1981a), attitudes toward littering (Winkel, 1981b), and replacing flat tires (Buikhuisen & Van Weringh, 1969). In all of these campaigns, so-called penal messages were used, specifically referring to the fact that such behaviors as driving drunk, driving with flat tires, driving

without using safety belts, and littering were legally prohibited or were threatened with a fine. Obviously, most of these behaviors are more instrumental and less value laden than sexual intimidation. More direct support for this strategy comes from Fischer (1986), who found that participants in a human sexuality course who received a lecture on rape laws became less accepting of rape.

The expectation that a victim-focused message is effective may be embedded in various cognitive-behavioral-oriented (Murphy, 1990) and social-learning-based models (Bandura, 1986) pointing at delinquents' impaired social or interpersonal cognition as the critical variable in predicting criminal or delinquent behavior in general (Yochelson & Samenow, 1976) and deviant sexual behavior in particular (Marshall & Barbaree, 1990; McFall, 1990; Murphy, 1990; Segal & Stermac, 1990; Stermac, Segal, & Gillis, 1990). Bandura (1986) suggests various mechanisms through which censurable behavior may be disengaged from negative self-evaluative consequences (self-punishment), such as through obscuring the relationship between the actions and the detrimental effects they cause on others, in particular on victims. Such obscuring facilitates the occurrence of criminal responses. Hollin (1990), moreover, reviews evidence suggesting that young offenders and nonoffenders significantly differ in role-taking ability, in the ability to see things from the other's point of view. Groenhuijsen and Winkel (1994) report substantial negative correlations between delinquent behavior and delinquents' victimization awareness, the degree in which they acknowledge that their actions victimize somebody else. Farrington (1992) reviews evidence suggesting that delinquents can be taught the cognitive skills in which they are deficient and that this can lead to a decrease in their offending. Effective particularly are programs aiming to modify the impulsive, egocentric thinking of delinquents, to teach them to stop and think before acting, to consider the consequences of their behavior, to conceptualize alternative ways of solving interpersonal problems, and to consider the impact of their behavior on other people, especially their victims. In the domain of sexual behavior, Murphy (1990) echoes these suggestions. He suggests that offenders, as part of a cognitive restructuring process, need accurate information about sexual intimidation and abuse and about the impact of such behaviors on victims. He notes that a number of programs therefore include the use of educational materials, presented from a victim's standpoint, or planned interactions with victim advocates, victim counselors, or victims themselves. A good example of this approach is the empathy-training module described by Knopp (1984). In this program, victim counselors, and preferably counselors representing the offender's actual victim, attend group sessions and discuss the effect victimization has had on the victim. In addition, offenders

are required to read books written by victims of sexual abuse and to discuss these books in groups. Similar Dutch programs were considered by Hermesen (1993), Groenhuijsen and Winkel (1994) and Winkel (1993).

Anecdotal support for its viability in the present behavioral domain comes from the Bakker et al. (1989) interviews, in which it was regularly noted that youngsters committing sexual intimidation are hardly aware that there were also victims involved in their behaviors. Many of these youngsters were heavily impressed by a rape video showing a confrontation between four convicted rapists undergoing treatment as well as four female rape victims—and reported that they had never realized or thought about the seriousness of detrimental consequences for victims.

Indirect but more systematic empirical support can be found in studies on the effect of exposure to sexual violence in pornographic material (Linz & Malamuth, 1993). Various studies suggest that such exposure may result in an increased acceptance of rape myths (Check & Malamuth, 1984), an increased acceptance of violence against women (Malamuth & Check, 1981), and decreased perceptions of rape victims' suffering (Malamuth & Check, 1980; Malamuth, Haber, & Feshbach, 1980). In view of the fact that these materials typically portray victims as deriving pleasure from violent behaviors (Check & Malamuth, 1986), one might argue that messages focusing on the adverse psychological consequences of such behavior will result in reverse effects. This speculation is further substantiated by some follow-up studies of debriefings (Anderson Foley, 1993). A typical procedure at the end of pornography experiments is to debrief participants, cautioning them about the fictitious nature of such portrayals. The debriefing typically used by Check and Malamuth (1987) in their research is as follows:

We would like to emphasize that the story you read was *complete fantasy*. Some of you read a story which depicted a rape. In reality, as you are hopefully aware, rape is a serious crime, punishable by many years in prison. As well, rape victims suffer severe psychological damage as well as the more obvious physical effects of the assault. Unfortunately, many people still believe a number of falsehoods or myths about rape. For example, one totally unfounded myth is that . . . women want to be raped or are turned on by rape. (appendix)

This debriefing, although also having elements of a perpetrator-focused strategy, may generally be considered a victim-focused message. The Donnerstein and Berkowitz (1981) and the Malamuth and Check (1984) studies suggest that such debriefings may result in a weakened acceptance of rape myths. However, Check and Malamuth's (1984) results suggest that these debriefing effects are far from robust, in the sense of emerging under all experimental conditions. They typically tended to occur after participants were exposed to rape depictions.

In summary, there appears to be some general theoretical support for the effectiveness of both types of messages. At least both forms can be embedded in a broader conceptual framework. However, the available empirical evidence is rather indirect, for example, based on analogy or on studies in other behavioral domains. The present experiment therefore aims at testing more directly the effectiveness of the two types of messages. More specifically, we examined whether these messages resulted in enhancing more negative evaluations of macho behavior, reducing the acceptance of myths, the conditional acceptance of violence in interactions, strengthening the perceived likelihood that perpetrators will encounter formal and informal negative consequences, and that victims may suffer psychological distress. Also, we were interested in exploring if the desired attitude effects emerged in both men and women.

METHOD

Sample

Participants ($N = 198$) came from various types of secondary educational institutions: 53 were involved in technical/administrative education; and 80 were involved in general, and 65 in preparatory, scientific training. Sixty-two participants were male, and 136 were female. Their average age was 16 years. Sixty-nine participants, 23 men and 46 women, were exposed to a victim-focused message; 63 participants (13 men and 50 women), to a perpetrator-focused message, whereas 66 participants (26 men and 40 women), served as controls (no communication). A slight age difference emerged between groups, $F(2, 194) = 3.86, p < .05$. Control group members were on average 16.2 years, victim-exposed 16 years, and perpetrator-exposed participants 15.8 years. No sex differences emerged between groups. All subsequent analyses controlled for age. All experimental conditions were run in all three educational settings. Groups of participants were randomly assigned to conditions.

Participants who saw the victim-focused or the perpetrator-focused video were run in small groups. All videos were introduced by a female instructor. Participants were told that they were going to be exposed to a video on the subject of sexual intimidation. Three issues were discussed with participants during this instruction: (a) Because the video was recorded in Groningen and thus is sometimes a bit difficult to understand due to accent, participants need to listen carefully; (b) the victims and perpetrators telling their stories in the video are real and are shown in such a way that no one can recognize them;

(c) in the victim-focused version, participants should note especially the consequences of sexual intimidation for victims; in the perpetrator-focused version, participants should note especially the consequences of sexual intimidation for the perpetrator. After exposure, participants filled out a questionnaire, either a male or female version, containing various background variables and the dependent measures.

Independent Variable

Using an already existing documentary film,² two videos—one victim-focused and the other perpetrator-focused—were created for the experiment. Both were designed in a similar fashion; for example, the order in which factual information was presented was the same. All videos provided information on the prevalence and legal definitions of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. Moreover, the two videos consisted of fragments of conversations of several boys and girls while they are interviewed in same-sex pairs. During these interviews, personal dating experiences are discussed. The boys, for example, note that boys, at least in some peer groups, gain respect by saying that they managed to overcome the initial resistances of a girl through verbal or physical force; that sexual assaults tend to be related to the victim's own behavior; and that they tend to talk about girls in a rather macho manner when they are in groups and to be more modest when they are alone. The interviews with the girls focus on their disliking boys' macho behaviors and that they sometimes feel very frightened when they are confronted with groups of boys late at night after visiting pubs. The bottom line of these various interviews is that girls actually mean no if they say no and that boys much more easily tend to sexualize personal encounters in which girls only try to be friendly.

The central focus of the two videos is a series of detailed interviews with real victims and perpetrators of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. These interviews form the basis of the experimental manipulation, and differences between videos typically emerged here. These interviews relate to three different scenarios:

1. A group of boys is spying on several girls who are dressing at a sports center. Fragments of conversations among the boys are heard, including such statements as "I would like to tie her up and screw her"; and bets, such as "if you grab her cunt, I'll pay you two and a half guilders" and "if you grab her tits, we'll pay you two and a half guilders each." The boys are messing around, obviously waiting for the girls to come out. When a girl is leaving the center, one of the boys (Hans) grabs her, touches her breasts, and kisses her. While a motorcyclist is passing by, noticing the incident, the girl is able to free herself

and escape the scene. While fleeing, Hans is still yelling threats at her. At night, Hans is visited by the police.

2. Linda, who works at a supermarket, is regularly bothered by her boss. While she is refilling the shelves, he stands too close behind her, telling her that she is special, and so forth. For a 6-year time period, she does not dare to tell anyone about what is going on. After her boss actually rapes her in the back of the store, she becomes very afraid of males; she feels filthy and ashamed. Eventually, her boyfriend finds out about it after observing her strange responses to sexual violence portrayed in the mass media. They decide to report to the police. Her boss gets convicted, but she loses her job in the meantime.
3. In a disco, Peter becomes acquainted with a girl and asks her if she wants to come out with him. Being outside, while fondling, he starts talking about sexual intercourse and the need to use a condom not to contract AIDS. When he tries to remove her pants, she tells him that she does not want this. He then gets furious and forces her to the ground, telling her, "if you say [A], you have to say [B] also." She is trying everything possible to resist him, holds her legs tight together, and begs him to let her go. He threatens her with a sharp object, and when people are passing by he covers her mouth with his hands. While some other persons are passing by she gets free and runs away. Later on, Peter is arrested by the police.

Both videos utilized Scenario 1. The victim-focused video then specifically considered the full Linda scenario (2), also involving fragments of an interview with her boyfriend, discussing the psychological impact of living with a raped partner and of finding out about her negative life experiences. Scenario 3 was also included, but only from the viewpoint of Jeannette, the girl who was sexually assaulted by Peter. This video thus strongly focused on the negative psychological consequences of sexual victimization for victims. Discussion centered on, *inter alia*, posttraumatic responses, such as fear of males; feelings of fear of being touched, even by intimates; the reluctance to talk openly about the incident; and feelings of self-blame, guilt, and shame.

The perpetrator-focused video used a minor part of the Linda scenario (2), providing factual information about what had happened. All fragments related to psychological distress were left out. Besides Scenario 1, this video especially considered the Peter scenario (3) in full detail. Moreover, a police officer threw light on the criminal justice aspects of sexual intimidation (discussing the procedures used during interviewing suspects, the risk of having to stay at the police station overnight, and so forth), while images of a jail were shown where an arrested person was locked in (noting that prisoners generally consider sex offenders to be of the lowest kind). This video thus heavily concentrated on the negative consequences for the perpetrator, including the various formal responses from the criminal justice

system and negative reactions from the social environment. These social reactions also emerged in Peter's interview: After his arrest, he felt forced to move to another village and to go to another school (due to fear of being recognized and stigmatized in his old village).

Measures

Using a questionnaire, five dependent measures derived from the pertinent literature were taken: (a) the evaluation of macho behavior in male-female interactions (Macho Behavior Scale) (Bonink, Croon, Damen, & Teuben, 1988; Damen & Van Oosten, 1988; Deitz, Blackwell, Daley, & Bentley, 1985; Hermesen 1993; Luiten, 1980; Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984); (b) sexual intimidation myths acceptance (Myths Acceptance Scale) (Burt, 1980; Murphy, 1990; Schwartz et al., 1981); (c) the Conditional Acceptance of Coerced Sex Scale (Nichols & Molinder, 1984; Winkel, 1984); (d) the Likelihood of Negative Consequences for the Perpetrator Scale (de Kleuver, 1991; Winkel, 1993); and (e) the Likelihood of Victims Suffering Psychological Distress Scale (Winkel & Koppelaar, 1991).

The Macho Behavior Scale ($\alpha = .67$) consisted of six items. Sample items include these: Girls love groups of boys showing off; girls do like a macho performance by boys; boys do not need to stop if they bother a girl physically and she is resisting that; and it is very bad/very good if boys show macho behavior. Responses were in terms of 7-point rating scales, ranging from *very strongly disagree* to *very strongly agree*, and from *very bad* to *very good*.

The Myths Acceptance Scale consisted of five items ($\alpha = .67$). Sample items include the following: Girls want to be taken violently; if a girl says no, she normally means yes; if a girl is raped by an acquaintance, then she precipitated it; and girls are actually asking to get raped if they wear sexy clothes. Responses were in terms of 7-point rating scales, varying from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*.

Conditional Acceptance of Coerced Sex was measured through seven items ($\alpha = .86$). Sample items include the following: If they are dating for 2 months and she regularly goes to bed with him, then he is allowed to force her into sex; a boy may force a girl into sex if she has had sex with him previously; a boy is permitted to have forced sex if he is so excited that he thinks he can't stop anymore; and if she says yes first but changes her mind later on, he is allowed to use violence on her.

Likelihood of Negative Consequences for the Perpetrator ($\alpha = .81$) consisted of eight items, examining the likelihood that a perpetrator of sexual

violence gets into contact with the police, will get a jail sentence, will come into contact with a judge, is rejected by people in his environment, will have problems in (later) getting a job, and will have problems in dating (again).

The scale tapping the Likelihood of Victims Suffering Psychological Distress consisted of seven items ($\alpha = .81$). Negative consequences examined were that a victim feels dirty, is frightened by boys and males, suffers from feelings of guilt, does not enjoy sex any longer, and can no longer sleep at night. Responses on the likelihood scales were on 7-point rating scales, ranging from *very unlikely* to *very likely*.

The questionnaire also included measures of background characteristics, such as age, sex, ethnic background, and experiences with (milder) forms of sexual intimidation. Females were asked, for example, how often they had experienced unwanted touching, kissing, sex-related remarks, and unwanted sex in bed. Males were asked how often they performed such behaviors. Responses were *never*, *sometimes*, *often*, and *very often*. Finally, the likelihood that boys force girls into sex if they are sure they will not be prosecuted or punished was examined (Malamuth, 1981).

RESULTS

The estimated likelihood that boys would force girls into sex if they were sure that this would not have aversive personal consequences for them (prosecution, punishment) was rather high. Sixty percent considered that to be a probable outcome; only 20% deemed that event unlikely. Also, substantial numbers of participants reported experiences with various forms of sexual intimidation. Although a majority (60%) of the boys reported never to have engaged in touching a girl when they knew that she actually did not want to, 37% reported to do that regularly, and 4% often or very often. Unwanted kissing was reported by 15% (2% often) of the boys. Unwanted sexual remarks were sometimes made by 61%, often by 3%, and very often by 5%. A majority of girls reported personal exposure to unwanted touching: sometimes, 56%; often, 7%; and very often, 2%. A similar pattern emerged for exposure to unwanted sexual remarks: sometimes, 61%; often, 7%; and very often, 3%. Unwanted exposure to kissing was reported by 29% (sometimes), and 2% (often). Attempted assaults or rapes were reported by 20 girls; 10 were sexually assaulted, and 1 girl was raped. Eighty-one percent of the girls and 67% of the boys reported knowing a person victimized by (attempted) rape or assault.

Data were first analyzed multivariately on the basis of a 3 (type of communication) \times 2 (sex) design. This analysis revealed significant main

TABLE 1: Means on Outcome Measures: Communication Strategy by Participant Sex

<i>Type of Communication</i>	<i>Victim-Focused Mean</i>	<i>Perpetrator-Focused Mean</i>	<i>Control Group Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Evaluation macho behavior ^a	2.55	2.51	2.74	
Boys	2.64	2.92	2.68 ^d	2.76
Girls	2.53	2.31	2.78	2.53
Myths acceptance ^a	1.95	2.15	2.04 ^b	
Boys	2.24	3.03	2.40 ^d	2.60 ^c
Girls	1.88	1.72	1.82	1.81
Conditional acceptance ^a	1.40	1.63	1.57 ^b	
Boys	1.45	2.35	1.63 ^d	1.86 ^c
Girls	1.39	1.27	1.53	1.39
Likelihood perpetrator consequences	4.52	5.35	4.61 ^b	
Boys	4.41	5.31	4.58	4.82
Girls	4.55	5.36	4.63	4.85
Likelihood victim consequences	6.00	5.66	5.64	
Boys	5.40	5.47	5.24	5.36 ^c
Girls	6.16	5.76	5.90	5.95

a. Lower score is parallel to communicative intention; else: higher.

b. Significant communication effect.

c. Significant sex effect.

d. Significant Communication \times Sex interaction.

effects for type of communication, $F(10, 366) = 3.38, p < .01$; for sex, $F(5, 183) = 7.98, p < .01$; and a significant Communication \times Sex interaction, $F(10, 368) = 2.27, p < .01$. Additional univariate analyses revealed sex effects, particularly on myth acceptance, $F(1, 187) = 27.24, p < .001$; on conditional acceptance, $F(1, 187) = 10.82, p < .001$; and on the likelihood of psychological harm for victims, $F(1, 187) = 12.19, p < .001$. Girls considered psychological distress to be a more likely response of victims; they more strongly rejected myths about sexual intimidation and the idea that coercion is allowed under specific circumstances (see marginal cells in Table 1). Due to type of communication, a marginally significant effect emerged on myth acceptance, $F(2, 187) = 2.71, p = .06$; significant effects on conditional acceptance, $F(2, 187) = 3.65, p < .05$; and on the likelihood of negative consequences for perpetrators, $F(2, 187) = 9.41, p < .01$. The most favorable values on both myths and conditional acceptance were found in participants exposed to the victim-focused message. The likelihood that perpetrators will encounter negative consequences was estimated the highest by participants exposed to a perpetrator-focused message. However, some of these communication effects are modified by significant interactions. Communication \times Sex effects emerged on the evaluation of macho behavior, $F(2,$

187) = 3.75, $p < .05$; on myth acceptance, $F(2, 187) = 5.07$, $p < .01$); and on conditional acceptance, $F(2, 187) = 8.60$, $p < .01$). On all three variables, a similar pattern emerged (see interior cells in Table 1). For male participants, the central target of the communication, the perpetrator-focused message appeared to backfire. Boys exposed to this message evaluated macho behavior more positively in interacting with girls. Instead of weakening myths about sexual intimidation, this message seemed to strengthen them. Moreover, the message appeared to enhance boys' conditional acceptance of coerced sex. In boys, the perpetrator-focused message thus resulted in various unwanted outcomes that did not emanate from a victim-focused strategy.

To gain some further insight into these outcomes with boys, we computed an overall index of their self-reported sexual intimidation, combining the measures reported above. Next, this index was correlated with the dependent measures. Significant correlations emerged between self-reported acts of intimidation and the evaluation of macho behavior ($r = -.26$; $p < .05$) and with the likelihood of psychological damage to victims ($r = -.30$; $p < .05$). High self-reporters thus evaluated macho behavior more positively and considered it less likely that victims suffer psychological harm. Thus, these correlations do not appear to support the usefulness of a perpetrator-focused message either because it backfires on the first variable and has no impact on the latter.

DISCUSSION

A persistent misconception about persuasive campaigning is to regard campaigns as innocuous instruments—at the worst, they do not reach the desired goals (Winkel, 1984). The present findings clearly challenge this notion: Campaigns may backfire and may cause boomerang effects, taking us further away into a situation in which more damage is done than without any campaign at all. Our findings particularly suggest that using a perpetrator-focused strategy in discouraging sexual intimidation is not a very sound idea. More generally, the notion that exposing persons to the threat of punishment has educative effects is not clearly supported. Actually, such a strategy may well result in enhancing men's misconceptions about desirable male-female interactions. Stereotypes become reinforced instead of being weakened. Due to the emergence of these boomerang effects, we decided to reexamine the perpetrator-focused video. In hindsight, several elements³ of the Peter scenario might be important in (partly) explaining these effects. First, Peter discusses the negative consequences of his arrest in a rather callous way. There are no explicit indications that he accepts these consequences as a

response to his own misbehavior. Second, he still discusses the incident in a particular way: "She agreed to come out with me (A), thus I have the right to force her (B)." Thus, in discussing the incident, he shows no signs of remorse. These elements of the Peter scenario may also be responsible for strengthening misconceptions. Future experiments with this persuasive strategy might profit from incorporating a "remorseful perpetrator," who is also accepting the negative consequences he encountered. Moreover, such experiments should aim at larger sample sizes for males, at full random assignment of individuals, and at the employment of control videos.

Future campaigns might also profit from experimenting with various victim-focused types of strategies. This strategy generally resulted in more positive returns. We are aware of the fact that this latter strategy is seriously objected to, at least in some segments of the women's movement (Winkel, 1995).⁴ They argue that females are again portrayed as victims—thus in terms of a concept with negative connotations. Inadvertently, victim-focused campaigns may also communicate that females are passive, vulnerable, or weak. The present findings suggest that it is more rational to refine and improve the victim-focused strategy and to look for ways to avoid such unwanted side effects (the actual occurrence of which should be documented in future studies) than to rigidly stick to the alternative strategy because it appears to be ideologically more acceptable at first sight. Of course, one may still argue that the present findings did not consider the impact of the video as a whole. It may be the case that the negative impact of the perpetrator-focused strategy is neutralized by the positive impact of the victim-focused strategy. Although future studies should focus on the overall impact of the video, our findings still suggest that the present combination of strategies is not particularly effective. Moreover, an examination of the relevant means indicates that the reverse effects clearly do not counterbalance; the negative impact appears to be much stronger. Finally, one might also argue that the original, combined video is not used in a vacuum. In classrooms, exposure will always be accompanied with guided instruction by teachers. Future studies should also assess the impact of the video together with a guided discussion.

NOTES

1. The Dutch words for *natural* and *obvious* are semantically related, which might sustain the slogan's potential for getting the public's attention.

2. *Boys and Sexual Violence*, developed by RIAGG Groningen (M. Bonink, E. Damen; Prevention Department) and Rutgershuis Groningen (R. Croon, T. Teuben; Prevention Department). For details, see Bonink, Croon, Damen, and Teuben (1988).

3. These suggestions came up after discussing the video with Jaap Ouwerkerk.

4. In a meeting of experts in May 1990, prior to launching the governmental campaign, such arguments were forcefully put forward, in particular by the women participants.

REFERENCES

- Abbey, A. (1982). Sex differences in attributions for friendly behavior: Do males misperceive females' friendliness? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 42, 830-838.
- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, J. M. (1980). *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Andenaes, J. (1977). The moral or educative influence of criminal law. In J. L. Tapp & F. J. Levine (Eds.), *Law, justice, and the individual in society: Psychological and legal issues* (pp. 50-60). New York: Holt.
- Andersen Foley, L. (1993). *A psychological view of the legal system*. Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark.
- Bakker, N., Damen, E., Kok, R., & Schilperoort, R. (1989). *Sexueel geweld van jongens: Motieven en alternatieven* [Boys' sexual violence: Motives and alternatives]. Groningen, The Netherlands: Stichting Tegen haar Wil/Stichting Mannentegen Sexueel Geweld/Riagg.
- Bandura, A. (1986). The social learning perspective: Mechanisms of aggression. In H. Toch (Ed.), *Psychology of crime and criminal justice* (pp. 198-237). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.
- Bestrijding van sexueel geweld tegen vrouwen en meisjes* [Controlling sexual violence against females and girls] (Nota Tweede Kamer: Parliamentary year 1983-1984, No. 18542, pp. 1-2). (1984). The Hague, the Netherlands: SDU.
- Bonink, M., Croon, R., Damen, E., & Teuben, T. (1988). *Buitenspel. Werkboek voor begeleiding bij de gelijknamige video-film* [Offside. Boys and sexual violence. A working book that can be used in connection with the video]. Groningen, The Netherlands: RIAGG Groningen en Rutgershuis.
- Brownmiller, S. (1975). *Against our will: Men, women, and rape*. New York: Bantam.
- Buikhuijsen, W., & Van Weringh, J. (1969). *Politie, auto, en veilig verkeer* [Police, automobile, and safe traffic]. Groningen: Wolters Noordhof.
- Burt, M. R. (1980). Cultural myths and support for rape. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 38, 217-230.
- Check, J.V.P., & Malamuth, N. M. (1984). Can there be positive effects of participation in pornography experiments? *Journal of Sex Research*, 20, 14-31.
- Check, J.V.P., & Malamuth, N.M. (1985). An empirical assessment of some feminist hypotheses about rape. *International Journal of Women's Studies*, 8, 414-423.
- Check, J.V.P., & Malamuth, N. M. (1986). Pornography and sexual aggression: A social-learning theory analysis. *Communication Yearbook*, 9, 181-213.
- Check, J.V.P., & Malamuth, N. M. (1987). *Ethical considerations in sex and aggression research* (Lamarsh Report 17). Ontario, Canada: York University.
- Damen, E., & Van Oosten, N. (1988). *Mannelijkheid en sexueel geweld: De dader belicht* [Masculinity and sexual violence: A focus on the perpetrator]. Deventer, the Netherlands: Van Loghum Slaterus.
- Deitz, S. R., Blackwell, K. T., Daley, P. C., & Bentley, B. J. (1985). Measurement of empathy toward rape victims and rapists. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 43, 372-384.

- de Kleuver, E. (1991). *Preventie van seksueel geweld door voorlichting aan jongeren*. Unpublished master's thesis, Department of Social Psychology, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam.
- de Roon, A. D. (1991). *Voorlichting over sexueel geweld: De aanloop naar een massa mediale campagne* [Communicating about sexual violence: Preparing for a mass-media campaign] (Jaarboek Public Relations en Voorlichting 1991). The Hague, the Netherlands: NGPR.
- Donnerstein, E., & Berkowitz, L. (1981). Victim reactions in aggressive erotic films as a factor in violence against women. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 41, 710-724.
- Farrington, D. P. (1992). Psychological contributions to the explanation, prevention, and treatment of offending. In F. Losel, D. Bender, & T. Bliesener (Eds.), *Psychology and law* (pp. 35-51). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Feinberg, J. (1965). The expressive function of punishment. *Monist*, 49, 397-423.
- Fischer, G. L. (1986). College student attitudes toward forcible date rape: Changes after taking a human sexuality course. *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy*, 12, 42-46.
- Groenhuijsen, M., & Winkel, F. W. (1994). The focusing on victims programs as an alternative sanction: A criminal justice and social psychological analysis. In G. F. Kirchhoff, E. Kosovski, & H. J. Schneider (Eds.), *International debates of victimology* (pp. 306-330). Monchengladbach, Germany: WSVN.
- Hermesen, S. (1993). *Na de daad. Werkboek preventie seksueel geweld* [Working book regarding the prevention of sexual violence]. Utrecht, the Netherlands: SWP.
- Hollin, C. R. (1990). *Cognitive-behavioral interventions with young offenders*. New York: Pergamon.
- Jeffery, C. R. (1965). Criminal behavior and learning theory. *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*, 56, 294-300.
- Knopp, F. H. (1984). *Retraining adult sex offenders: Methods and models*. Syracuse, New York: Safer Society Press.
- Kotler, P. (1975). *Marketing for nonprofit organisations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Linz, D., & Malamuth, N. M. (1993). *Pornography*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Luiten, A. (1980). *De VU-student en seksualiteit*. Amsterdam: Vormingscentrum VU.
- Malamuth, N. M. (1981). Rape proclivity among males. *Journal of Social Issues*, 37, 138-157.
- Malamuth, N. M., & Check, J.V.P. (1980). Penile tumescence and perceptual responses to rape as a function of victim's perceived reactions. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 10, 528-547.
- Malamuth, N. M., & Check, J.V.P. (1981). The effects of massmedia exposure on acceptance of violence against women: A field experiment. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 15, 436-446.
- Malamuth, N. M., & Check, J.V.P. (1984). Debriefing effectiveness following exposure to pornographic rape depictions. *Journal of Sex Research*, 20, 1-13.
- Malamuth, N. M., Haber, S., & Feshbach, S. (1980). Testing hypotheses regarding rape: Exposure to sexual violence, sex differences, and the "normality" of rapists. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 14, 121-137.
- Marshall, W. L., & Barbaree, H. E. (1990). Outcome of comprehensive cognitive-behavioral treatment programs. In W. L. Marshall, D. R. Laws, & H. E. Barbaree (Eds.), *Handbook of sexual assault: Issues, theories, and treatment of the offender* (pp. 363-389). New York: Plenum.
- McFall, R. M. (1990). The enhancement of social skills: An information processing analysis. In W. L. Marshall, D. R. Laws, & H. E. Barbaree (Eds.), *Handbook of sexual assault: Issues, theories, and treatment of the offender* (pp. 311-331). New York: Plenum.

- McGuire, W. J. (1981). Theoretical foundations of campaigns. In D. W. Rajecki (Ed.), *Attitudes: Themes and advances* (pp. 78-92). Sunderland, MA: Sinauer.
- Murphy, W. D. (1990). Assessment and modification of cognitive distortions in sex offenders. In W. L. Marshall, D. R. Laws, & H. E. Barbaree (Eds.), *Handbook of sexual assault: Issues, theories, and treatment of the offender* (pp. 331-343). New York: Plenum.
- Nichols, H. R., & Molinder, I. (1984). *Multiphasic Sex Inventory manual*. Tacoma, WA: Authors.
- Rapaport, K., & Burkhart, B. R. (1984). Personality and attitudinal characteristics of sexually coercive college males. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 93, 216-221.
- Rice, R. E., & Paisley, W. J. (1981). Mass communicating: Changing conceptions of the audience. Brenda Dervin. In R. E. Rice & W. J. Paisley (Eds.), *Public communication campaigns* (pp. 41-71). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Schwartz, J., Williams, H., & Pepitone-Rockwell, F. (1981). Construction of a rape awareness scale. *Victimology*, 6, 110-119.
- Segal, Z. V., & Stermac, L. E. (1990). The role of cognition in sexual assault. In W. L. Marshall, D. R. Laws, & H. E. Barbaree (Eds.), *Handbook of sexual assault: Issues, theories, and treatment of the offender* (pp. 161-173). New York: Plenum.
- Stermac, L. E., Segal, Z. V., & Gillis, R. (1990). Social and cultural factors in sexual assault. In W. L. Marshall, D. R. Laws, & H. E. Barbaree (Eds.), *Handbook of sexual assault: Issues, theories, and treatment of the offender* (pp. 143-161). New York: Plenum.
- Walker, N. (1964). Morality and the criminal law. *Howard Journal of Penology and Crime Prevention*, 11, 209-219.
- Winkel, F. W. (1981a). Poenale voorlichting: Een generale preventie experiment [Penal communication: A general-prevention experiment]. *Tijd schrift voor Criminologie*, 23, 21-31.
- Winkel, F. W. (1981b). Kleine milieucriminaliteit: Pleidooi voor poenale voorlichting [Environmental petty crime: A plea for penal communication]. *Mens en Maatschappij*, 56, 22-42.
- Winkel, F. W. (1984). Changing misconceptions about rape through informational campaigns: A model. *Victimology: An International Journal*, 9, 262-272.
- Winkel, F. W. (1993). Opvattingen van jeugdige delinquenten over criminalereel gedrag: 2 studies naar "gunstige definities" en gerichtheid op criminaliteit [Juvenile delinquents' beliefs about criminal behavior: Two studies on "favorable definitions" and criminal involvement]. *Tijdschrift voor Ontwik kelingspsychologie*, 20, 151-170.
- Winkel, F. W. (1995). Slachtofferschap van misdrijven als psychologische calamiteit: Een nuancerend vanuit het "Strain-Pain-model" [Criminal victimization as a psychological calamity: A more nuanced perspective suggested by the "Strain-Pain-model"]. *De Psycholoog*, 30, 155-162.
- Winkel, F. W., & Koppelaar, L. (1991). Rape victims' style of self presentation and secondary victimization by the environment: An experiment. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 6, 29-41.
- Winkel, F. W., & Vrij, A. (1996). Het bestrijden van criminaliteit [Controlling crime in "persuasion and activation"]. In P. G. Klandermans & E. Seydel (Eds.), *Overtuigen en Activeren* (pp. 179-200). Assen, the Netherlands: Van Gorcum.
- Yochelson, S., & Samenow, S. E. (1976). *The Criminal Personality, Vol. 1: A profile for change*. New York: Jason Aronsen.
- Zimring, F., & Hawkins, G. (1977). The legal threat as an instrument of social change. In J. L. Tapp & F. J. Levine (Eds.), *Law, justice, and the individual in society: Psychological and legal issues* (pp. 60-70). New York: Holt.

Frans Willem Winkel received master's degrees in law (from Erasmus University, Rotterdam) and psychological methodology (from the University of Amsterdam) and a doctorate from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. He is currently involved with the Kurt Lewin Institute for Post-Graduate Studies. He serves on the executive boards of the European Association of Psychology and Law (president-elect), the World Society of Victimology (course codirector), the Netherlands Victim Support, and the Slachtoffer in Beeld Foundation. He is program director of the project Quality of Victim Support, sponsored by the ACHMEA Foundation. (Stichting ACHMEA Slachtoffer en Samenleving).

Esther de Kleuver studied social psychology and received a master's degree in psychology from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her thesis was on the prevention of sexual intimidation. She is currently employed with the Scientific Research Advisory Unit of the National Criminal Intelligence Division in the Netherlands. Her major research focus as part of this unit is offender profiling in cases of stranger rapes.